II

ON THE ROAD

1859—1861

FROM July to September every year the leading theatres in London and the provincial cities were closed for the summer vacation. This plan is still adhered to more or less, but in London, at any rate, some theatres keep their doors open all the year round. During these two months most actors take their holiday, but when we were with the Keans we were not in a position to afford such a luxury. Kate and I were earning good salaries for our age,[1] but the family at home was increasing in size, and my mother was careful not to let us think that there never could be any rainy days. I am bound to say that I left questions of thrift, and what we could afford and what we couldn't entirely to my parents, I received sixpence a week pocket-money, with which I was more than content for many years. Poor we may have been at this time, but, owing to my mother's diligent care and cleverness, we always looked nice and neat. One

[1] Of course, all salaries are bigger now than they were then. The " stars " in old days earned large sums—Edmund Kean received two hundred and fifty pounds for four performances —'but the ordinary members of a company were paid at a very moderate rate. I received fifteen shillings a week at the Princess's until I played Puck/when my salary was doubled.—E. T.